

## ASSASSINATION PANEL WANTS 3 TO TESTIFY

### O'Neill Says Move Is Seen as Way to Shore Up Dr. King Inquiry— Witnesses Are Not Identified

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WASHINGTON, March 3—Thomas P. O'Neill Jr., the Speaker of the House, said today that members of the troubled Assassinations Committee hoped that testimony from three witnesses might persuade the House to let the committee continue its investigation into the death of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Mr. O'Neill mentioned the witnesses, and the possibility of a public hearing at which they would testify, after meeting for almost an hour with the Democratic members of the Assassinations Committee. The panel was established last September to look into the remaining questions surrounding the deaths of Dr. King and President Kennedy.

The committee has been wracked by dissension for the last three weeks. Its chairman, Representative Henry B. Gonzalez, Democrat of Texas, submitted his resignation yesterday after accusing other committee members of trying to usurp his power.

The subject of the dispute has been Richard A. Sprague, the committee's chief counsel and director, who Mr. Gonzalez accused of being an "unscrupulous individual, and unconscionable scoundrel."

Mr. Gonzalez has been ill at his home in Texas for the last 10 days, apparently refusing to take any calls except from his staff. Mr. O'Neill, a Massachusetts Democrat, has refused to accept Mr. Gonzalez's resignation until he has talked with him. He has said that the resignation would have to be approved by the full House of Representatives.

Representative Jim Wright, the majority leader, and Representative Richardson Preyer, the North Carolina Democrat who is chairman of the subcommittee investi-

gating the Kennedy assassination, said that the full committee would meet on Monday in an attempt to adopt rules and a proposed budget and to consider whether to hold public hearings on the progress and substance of both the Kennedy and King investigations.

The idea of hearings was acknowledged by several committee members as an attempt to redirect the attention of both the Congress and the public to the substance of the investigations, rather than the battle between Mr. Gonzalez and Mr. Sprague.

Members of the committee refused to say who the three witnesses might be. However, Representative Christopher Dodd, Democrat of Connecticut, said in response to questions that they would not include James Earl Ray, the man who pleaded guilty of killing Dr. King and who has indicated that he would like to testify.

Whether the committee could stage hearings before losing its mandate, which expires on March 31, was questioned by Representative John B. Anderson, Republican of Illinois, and a member of the committee.

"A lawyer doesn't put witnesses on the stand before they have been thoroughly interrogated in private," he said, adding that because of various restrictions such private questioning has not yet occurred.

"I'm a little bit mystified as to who these witnesses are and as to what the committee staff thinks they can contribute," he said.

Mr. Anderson also said he thought it was "absolutely essential" to publicly discuss the allegations made by Mr. Gonzalez against Mr. Sprague before the committee attempted to seek a permanent authorization.

In another development, a spokesman for the Federal Bureau of Investigation confirmed reports that it had received and was investigating a copy of note allegedly sent by Lee Harvey Oswald, the man the Warren Commission said killed President Kennedy, to the late Texas oilman, H. L. Hunt.

The note, dated two weeks before President Kennedy's death, said: "Dear Mr. Hunt, I would like information concerning my position. I am asking only for information. I am suggesting that we discuss the matter, fully before any steps are taken by me or anyone else. Thank you."